Subsidy on fertilizers

1290. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item under the caption "Joshi opposes Sinha's claim on fertilizer subsidy" which appeared in the daily Financial Express, New Delhi, dated January 30, 1991, wherein Shri Sharad Joshi, Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee on Agriculture (SAC) has claimed that fertilizer subsidy does not benefit any farmers, small or big;

(b) whether Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee on Agriculture has been apprised of the NCAER study which mantions that 30 per cent of big farmers owning 70 per cent cultivable area availed 70 per cent targetted food subsidies (NCAER Seminar Study, 1980);

(c) since the prices of fertilizer are administered ones, does the Chairman, SAC, opine that these prices are not set properly which encourage only "inefficiency";

(d) whether any attempt has been made to compare international norms, derated to Indian operating conditions, in the cost of production of fertilisers at typical international locations vis-a-vis Indian plants; if so, the details of the findings; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take to reduce the food subisdy to manageable levels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAYANTILAL VIRCHANDBHAI SHAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Chairman of the Standing Advisery Committee on Agriculture was aware of the findings of NCAER study. However, NCAER findings have little bearing on the views of Standing Advisory Committee on Agriculture.

(c) No, Sir. However, the Standing Advisory Committee have absered that there is a need for promoting cost effectiveness, particularly as regards the capital structure.

(d) No such study has been undertaken. However, the Planning Commission appraises all projects in the Central Public Sector including their economic viability.

(e) Food Corporation of India (FCI) have been taking various measures, like reduction in staff strength, reduction in transit losses and storage losses, etc., to reduce their operational costs, which will help in reducing food subsidy.

Success in dry land farming in Karnataka

1291. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item under the caption "Karnataka's success story in dryland farming" which appeared in the daily 'Financial Express' dated the 12th January, 1991, mentioning that the watershed programme had resulted among other things in raising yields of major crops, increasing availability of fodder and improving groundwater levels;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to replicate the programme as a National Programme through setting up an apex Dryland Development Board; and

(c) if answer to the part (b) above be in the negetive the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAYANTILAL VIRCHANDBHAI SHAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In the light of the experiences gained in Karnataka and in other states in the VIIth Five Year Plan and in consonance with the recommendations of the Working Group constituted by the Planning Commission for formulation of VIIIth Five Year Plan on rainfed agricul-